Sophie Scholl: She Made a Difference

By Mariane Rizzuto

In 1933, in Germany, Adolf Hitler took control as the chancellor. The first Concentration Camp named Dachau, located in Germany, was opened within the year.  The already heavy anti-Semitism got worse as the Jewish citizens in Germany and soon the surrounding countries were rounded up and imprisoned.  Soon after Hitler came into power he set up the gestapo.  The gestapo was secret police officers who invaded people's privacy and kept everyone from rebelling against Hitler.

Sophie Magdalena Scholl was born in Germany on May 9, 1921. She grew up under Hitler’s rule. She was only eleven years old when Hitler came to power.  Her childhood was marred by the horror of her country’s political situation and the gestapo, a sneaky shadow living in the background of her teenage years.  Not only was her childhood changed by Hitler’s reign but the course of her entire life was deterred as well.

In 1942 Sophie joined a group that her brother and some of his friends had created called the White Rose. They opposed Hitler, his rule and the gestapo.  They created pamphlets opposing the strict policies being enforced in Germany.  They painted graffiti trying to draw attention to the terrible things going on in Europe.  They did these actions all while knowing that if they were caught they would spend the rest of their lives in jail and probably be executed.  But they were brave enough to stand up for what they believed in.

On February 18, 1943 Sophie and her brother, Hans, took a big risk and spread some of their pamphlets around their school campus in broad daylight.  The gestapo caught them.  The White Rose was put under investigation and the siblings were put in jail and interrogated.  They had a short trial and executed by February 22.

In making the choice to stand up to Hitler even in their small way they risked their lives and the lives of everyone they cared about.  They had a cause that was important to them and they had the courage to stand up for that cause despite the highly probable, fatal consequences.  It was more important to them to do what they believed to be right than to give in to oppression and let something they knew was wrong happen right under their noses.

Works Cited

<http://www.whiterosesociety.org/>